

The Malankara Syrian Catholic Church

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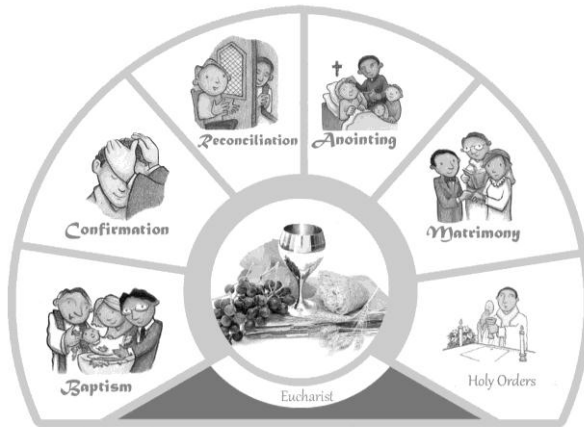
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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.4. What are Sacraments?

Sacraments (koodasha) are the direct liable means to partake in the divine grace. It derives from the Syriac word kadish which means 'to sanctify'. Every phase in the life of an individual is sanctified by these seven sacraments. Catechism of the Catholic Church defines the sacraments as 'the visible and efficacious signs, instituted by Christ

and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us' (CCC 1131).

This definition sums up all the mysteries about the sacraments of the church

- The sacraments are the visible and efficacious signs.
- The sacraments are instituted by Christ. Christ instituted all seven sacraments as ways in which He could be present to His people even after His ascension into heaven.
- The sacraments are also entrusted to the Church. Christ gave the sacraments to the Church so that the Church could dispense them to the faithful.
- The sacraments dispense divine life. People who receive the sacraments actually share in the divine life of God. His presence enters into their souls, He helps them to live the Christian

life, and He saves them so that they may reach eternal life.

1.5. The Seven Sacraments

The council of Trent in 1545 affirmed that there are only seven sacraments in the church. They are as follows:

- i. Baptism
- ii. Confirmation
- iii. Eucharist
- iv. Réconciliation
- v. Matrimony
- vi. Holy Orders
- vii. Anointing of the Sick

The sevenfold list of sacraments is organized into three groups: the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist); the sacraments of healing (Reconciliation and anointing of the Sick) and the sacraments of the service (Holy Orders and Matrimony). None of

these sacraments are mere products of the church. According to the Holy Scripture and the sacred tradition, Jesus Christ is the founder of all these sacraments. Let us see the biblical foundation of all the seven sacraments.

Sl.No.	Sacraments	Bible Quotes
1.	Baptism	Mt 28 : 19-20
2.	Confirmation	Jn 14 :16, 16 :13
3.	Eucharist	Mt 26:29, Mk 14:22-25, Lk: 22:19-20, 1Cor 11:23-25
4.	Reconciliation	Jn 20 : 22-23
5.	Matrimony	Mt 19: 4-6
6.	Anointing of the Sick	Mt 10: 5-8, Jam 5: 14-15
7.	Holy Orders	Mt 16: 19-20, Jn 20: 22- 23

1.6. Sacraments and the Church

The words and works of Jesus were salvific. The same salvific power is actualized today by the celebration of the sacraments. Jesus Christ is the visible sign of invisible God. In this sense, Jesus Christ is the true sacrament. The Church which gives Christ today to the world is also a sacrament. The sacraments exist and celebrated in the Church. Sacraments are Christ's gift to the Church. It is her duty to administer them and protect them from misuse. Sacraments exist for the Church and through the Church. They are for her, because the Body of Christ which is the Church is established, nourished and perfected through the sacraments. They exist through her, because the sacraments are the power of Christ's body, for example in reconciliation, where Christ forgives our sins through the Priest. The seven sacraments are the seven pillars of the church. Though all the sacraments are instituted by Christ, their sacraments forms were given by the church. So it is very important to know the teaching of the

church in order to understand each sacrament. Sacraments are not magic. A sacrament can be effective only if one understands and accepts in faith. Sacraments not only presuppose faith, they also strengthen it and give expression to it. In this text, we will learn the seven sacraments of the Church briefly.



Chapter Two

BAPTISM

Baptism marks the entry of the believer into the Christian community. Along with Confirmation and Eucharist, it is one of the Sacraments of Initiation, giving access to the full sacramental life of the Church. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and joined with Christ, sharing in His divinity and destined for eternal life.

2.1. Minister of The Sacrament

The ordinary ministers of solemn baptism are the bishop and the priest. By delegation, a deacon may

confer the sacrament solemnly as an extraordinary minister. Anyone can baptize in an emergency.

2.2. Recipient of Baptism

Every living human being, not yet baptized, is the subject of this sacrament.

2.2.a. Baptism of Adults

Christ's command excludes no one when He bids the Apostles teach all nations and baptize them. After completely understanding what the faith teaches they turn to live with Christ.

2.2.b. Baptism of Infants

The Church, however, maintains absolutely that the law of Christ applies as well to infants as to adults. When the Redeemer declares (John 3) that it is necessary to be born again of water and the Holy Spirit in order to enter the Kingdom of God, His words may be justly understood to mean that He includes all.

2.3. Adjuncts of Baptism

2.3.a. Baptistery (*Mamodisa Thotti*)

According to the canons of the Church, baptism except in case of necessity is to be administered in

churches. Inside the churches there is a baptismal font, or where there is a baptistery close to the church. The term "baptistery" is commonly used for the space set aside for the conferring of baptism.

2.3.b. Baptismal Water

In administering solemn baptism, however the Church prescribes that the water used should be hot and cold water, the priest stands before the baptistery, With his right hand, he holds the vessel which contains the hot water, and with his left hand, the one which contains the cold water. With arms crossed, right above left, he then pours the water slowly into the font, according to the season of the year.

2.3.c. Holy Oils

Two kinds of oils shall be used in the administration of baptism. In baptism, the priest uses the oil consecrated by the bishop, and Chrism (Myron). The oil of ointment, which is consecrated by the bishop, shall be administered before immersion. The holy Chrism (Myron), confirms the baptized and shall be administered after baptism immediately. The baptized person thus receives two sacraments

together Baptism and the Holy Myron (Chrism) and is to be applied to the crown of the head, and ended with participation of the baptized to the third sacrament the Holy Communion.

2.3.d. Sponsors

When infants are solemnly baptized, persons (godparents, godfather and godmother) assist at the ceremony to make profession of the faith in the child's name and receive. The godparent stands as the sponsor of the infant by giving the prescribed denunciations of Satan and affirmations of accepting Christ and it is they who finally recites the Creed. These sponsors, are obliged to instruct it concerning faith and morals.

2.3.e. Baptismal Name

From the earliest times names were given in baptism. The priest is directed to see that obscene, fabulous, and ridiculous names or those of heathen gods or of infidel men be not imposed. On the contrary the priest is to recommend the names of saints.

2.3.f. Baptismal Robe

In the primitive Church, a white robe was worn by the newly baptized for a certain period (at least one

week usually) after the ceremony. White signifies the purity received by the grace of God.

2.4. Baptism In Malankara Tradition

There are two main services:-

1. Preparation for Baptism

- a. Naming
- b. Renouncing the Satan
- c. Receives Christ
- d. The anointing with the Holy Oil.

2. Baptizing

- a. Bathing with water
- b. New creation in the spirit.

Through Baptism one strips off the old man and puts on the new man. One is reborn as new creation in the spirit. It is through this one enters in association with Jesus and the Church. Incorporated into the Church by Baptism, the faithful have received the sacramental character that consecrates them for Christian religious worship. The baptismal seal enables and

commits Christians to serve God by a vital participation in the holy liturgy of the Church and to exercise their baptismal priesthood by the witness of holy lives and practical charity (CCC 1272).

2.5. Conclusion

The Holy Spirit has marked us with the seal of the Lord ("Dominicus character") "for the day of redemption. Baptism indeed is the seal of eternal life. The faithful Christian who has "kept the seal" until the end, remaining faithful to the demands of his Baptism, will be able to depart this life "marked with the sign of faith,⁸⁸ with his baptismal faith, in expectation of the blessed vision of God - the consummation of faith - and in the hope of resurrection (CCC 1274).



Chapter Three

CONFIRMATION

Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the "sacraments of Christian initiation," whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For "by the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed."(CCC1285)

Confirmation is the sacrament of anointing with holy Myron by which all who become children of God through Baptism are especially given the Holy Spirit and are confirmed and made perfect. This sacrament makes one a perfect Christian, firm in faith and soldier of Christ with the special abundance of the Holy Spirit. The Greek word 'Myron' means "sweet-smelling oil".

Every baptized person not yet confirmed can and should receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Since Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist form a unity, it follows that "the faithful are obliged to receive this sacrament at the appropriate time," for without Confirmation and Eucharist, Baptism is certainly valid and efficacious, but Christian initiation remains incomplete.

3.1. The Minister of the Sacrament

The ordinary ministers of solemn Confirmation are the bishop and the priest.

3.2. Recipient of Baptism

One who is baptized in the Church.

It is evident from its celebration that the effect of the sacrament of Confirmation is the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost.

3.3. The Effects of Confirmation

Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace:

- it roots us more deeply in the divine filiation which makes us cry, "Abba! Father!";
- It unites us more firmly to Christ;
- It increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us;
- It renders our bond with the Church more perfect;
- It gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross:

3.4. Adjuncts of Confirmation

3.4.a. Holy Myron.

The celebrant seals the forehead of the candidate with Myron three times in the form of the Cross. After

the prayer of anointing, the body of the candidate from head to feet is anointed with Myron.

3.4.b. Crown

After the confirmation the candidate is crowned. In the Malankara Church, the custom of placing either the handcuff (kayyura) or the Hymina (Oorrara) of the sacred vestment on the head of the candidate is in practice. There are some places where they use a special crown for this ceremony.

3.5. Confirmation in Malankara Tradition

There are three main services:-

1. Anointing with Myron
2. Crowning
3. Receiving of Holy Communion

3.6. Conclusion

Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which gives the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds.

Confirmation, like Baptism, imprints a spiritual mark or indelible character on the Christian's soul; for this reason one can receive this sacrament only once in one's life. (CCC 1316,1317)



Chapter Four

HOLY QURBONO

Among the sacraments the most important and crown of them is the Holy Qurbono. It is the commemoration of the whole history of salvation. The Syrian word Qurbono has the following meanings: offering of gift, offering of sacrifice and gift. The Malankara Church follows the Antiochian Rite of liturgy which was formed and developed in Antioch.

4.1. Structure of the Eucharist

4.1.a. Preparation rites (tuyobo): The important elements of the preparation rites are the vesting of the celebrant and the preparation of the bread and wine on the altar. The priest places the bread in the

paten and pours the wine in the chalice and holds them in the form of a cross. Then he remembers the names of the faithful, the sick and the departed. Then he places the paten and the chalice on the altar and covers them with the veil (Sosappa). The preparation rites are concluded with censuring.

4.1.b. Public celebration or Pre-anaphora: The pre-anaphora begins with a solemn procession around the altar. The entrance hymn is a beautiful summary of our doctrine of Christ. After the procession, the priest begins the Trisagion, which is addressed to Christ.

4.1.c. Reading of the Scriptures: Then the Epistles and the Gospel are read. Formerly, the lessons from the Old Testament were also read at this moment. The Gospel is the “life-giving proclamation” of the words and deeds of our Lord Jesus Christ.

4.1.d. Promiun-Sedra and the Blessing of the Censor. The first step of the censuring of the whole church, the celebrant offers incense and blesses the censor. The blessing of the censor in the Name of the Holy Trinity. The offering of incense means that the prayers of the Church ascend towards God as a fragrant offering that pleases God.

4.1.e. The Nicene Creed: Creed is the summary of the faith of the Church. Creed is the confession of our faith in the Holy Trinity, the Church, one baptism, the Kingdom of God and the final resurrection. These fundamental doctrines are regularly evoked in our prayers.

4.1.f. Offering of the Holy Qurbano: The part of the celebration that follows the Creed is called 'Anaphora' (Greek word means 'offering'). As the first step, the priest washes his hands, symbolizing the purification of the heart. Then he kneels down before the altar and says an inaudible prayer and commemorates the names(intention).

4.1.g. Kiss of peace and the lifting up of the veil: Kiss of peace is exchanged in accordance with our Lord's words to reconcile each other before offering a sacrifice (Mtt.5:23-24).

4.1.h. Words of Institution: The celebrant signs crosses over the bread and wine proclaiming the institution of the Eucharist by Christ in His Last Supper.

4.1.i. Anamnesis or the Commemoration of the Salvific works: During the Last Supper, Our Lord instructed His disciples : "Do this in remembrance of me" (Lk.22:16; 1 Cor.14:24-25). Following this

commandment, the priest evokes the events in the earthly life of our Lord and His second coming.

4.1.j. Invocation of the Holy Spirit (Epiclesis) The Holy Spirit descends and makes the bread and the wine the very body and blood of Christ. The same Spirit comes and abides in us to make us the Church, the Body of Christ.

4.1.k. Intercessions (Tubden): The intercessions contain six canons ('set of prayers'), each consisting of three prayers. The first three canons commemorate the living and the rest the departed.

4.1.l. Fraction: The fraction ceremony is the preparation for the communion. The prayer during the fraction evokes the passion, death and resurrection of Christ, the living bread who was "broken" on the cross for our salvation.

4.1.m. The Lord's Prayer: Here the Lord's Prayer serves as the preparatory prayer for receiving the Holy Communion. At the end of the Qurbano, we address God "Our Father" and thus we confess that we are His sons through our communion with Christ.

4.1.n. Holy Things to the Holy: This is an invitation to receive the Holy Qurbano, as well a warning about its sacredness. This means that through the Holy

Qurbano, we have been granted communion with the Holy Trinity. Then the service is concluded with the Kukliun, which a cycle of prayers seeking the intercession of the Virgin Mary and the saints, as well as commemorating the departed priests and faithful.

4.1.o. Holy Communion and the Thanksgiving: The Holy Mysteries are brought to the people to communicate them. In the thanksgiving prayer that follows, the priest gives thanks to God for His abundant mercy “wherewith He has made us worthy to partake of His heavenly table”. With the dismissal, the celebration is concluded.

4.2. Conclusion

The holy Eucharist completes Christian initiation. Those who have been raised to the dignity of the royal priesthood by Baptism and configured more deeply to Christ by Confirmation participate with the whole community in the Lord's own sacrifice by means of the Eucharist.

"At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and

resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet 'in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us (CCC 1323). Because Christ himself is present in the sacrament of the altar, he is to be honored with the worship of adoration. "To visit the Blessed Sacrament is . . . a proof of gratitude, an expression of love, and a duty of adoration toward Christ our Lord" (Paul VI, MF 66)



Chapter Five

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS

Holy Orders is the sacrament through which the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles continues to be exercised in the Church until the end of time: thus it is the sacrament of apostolic ministry. It includes three degrees: episcopate, presbyterate, and diaconate.(CCC 1536)

5.1. WHY IS THIS SACRAMENT CALLED "ORDERS"?

The word order in Roman antiquity designated an established civil body, especially a governing body. Ordinatio means incorporation into an ordo. In the

Church there are established bodies which Tradition, not without a basis in Sacred Scripture,⁴ has since ancient times called *taxeis* (Greek) or *ordines*. And so the liturgy speaks of the *ordo episcoporum*, the *ordo presbyterorum*, the *ordo diaconorum*. Other groups also receive this name of *ordo*: catechumens, virgins, spouses, widows, . . .

5.2. The priesthood of the Old Covenant

The chosen people was constituted by God as "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. But within the people of Israel, God chose one of the twelve tribes, that of Levi, and set it apart for liturgical service; God himself is its inheritance. A special rite consecrated the beginnings of the priesthood of the Old Covenant. The priests are "appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. (CCC 1539)

5.3. The one priesthood of Christ

Everything that the priesthood of the Old Covenant prefigured finds its fulfillment in Christ Jesus, the "one mediator between God and men. The Christian tradition considers Melchizedek, "priest of God Most High," as a prefiguration of the priesthood of Christ, the unique "high priest after the order of Melchizedek"; holy, blameless, unstained, by a single

offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified,"¹⁸ that is, by the unique sacrifice of the cross. (CCC 1544)

5.4. Two participations in the one priesthood of Christ

Christ, high priest and unique mediator, has made of the Church "a kingdom, priests for his God and Father."²⁰ The whole community of believers is, as such, priestly. The faithful exercise their baptismal priesthood through their participation, each according to his own vocation, in Christ's mission as priest, prophet, and king. Through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation the faithful are "consecrated to be . . . a holy priesthood.(CCC 1546)

5.5. The Three Degrees of The Sacrament of Holy Orders

"The divinely instituted ecclesiastical ministry is exercised in different degrees by those who even from ancient times have been called bishops, priests, and deacons.Catholic doctrine, expressed in the liturgy, the Magisterium, and the constant practice of the Church, recognizes that there are two degrees of ministerial participation in the priesthood of Christ:

the episcopacy and the presbyterate . The diaconate is intended to help and serve them. For this reason the term sacerdos in current usage denotes bishops and priests but not deacons. Yet Catholic doctrine teaches that the degrees of priestly participation (episcopate and presbyterate) and the degree of service (diaconate) are all three conferred by a sacramental act called "ordination," that is, by the sacrament of Holy Orders (CCC 1554)

5.6. Who Can Confer This Sacrament?

Christ himself chose the apostles and gave them a share in his mission and authority. Raised to the Father's right hand, he has not forsaken his flock but he keeps it under his constant protection through the apostles, and guides it still through these same pastors who continue his work today.⁶¹ Thus, it is Christ whose gift it is that some be apostles, others pastors. He continues to act through the bishops.⁶²

5.7. Who Can Receive This Sacrament?

"Only a baptized man validly receives sacred ordination. The Lord Jesus chose men to form the college of the twelve apostles, and the apostles did

the same when they chose collaborators to succeed them in their ministry. The college of bishops, with whom the priests are united in the priesthood, makes the college of the twelve an ever-present and ever-active reality until Christ's return. The Church recognizes herself to be bound by this choice made by the Lord himself. For this reason the ordination of women is not possible (CCC 1577).

5.8. The Effects of The Sacrament Of Holy Orders

5.8.a. The indelible character

This sacrament configures the recipient to Christ by a special grace of the Holy Spirit, so that he may serve as Christ's instrument for his Church. By ordination one is enabled to act as a representative of Christ, Head of the Church, in his triple office of priest, prophet, and king. As in the case of Baptism and Confirmation this share in Christ's office is granted once for all. The sacrament of Holy Orders, like the other two, confers an indelible spiritual character and cannot be repeated or conferred temporarily.

5.9. CONCLUSION

St. Paul said to his disciple Timothy: "I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands" (2 Tim 1:6), and "If any one aspires to the office of bishop, he desires a noble task." (1 Tim 3:1) To Titus he said: "This is why I left you in Crete, that you amend what was defective, and appoint presbyters in every town, as I directed you" (Titus 1:5). The whole Church is a priestly people. Through Baptism all the faithful share in the priesthood of Christ. This participation is called the "common priesthood of the faithful." Based on this common priesthood and ordered to its service, there exists another participation in the mission of Christ: the ministry conferred by the sacrament of Holy Orders, where the task is to serve in the name and in the person of Christ the Head in the midst of the community.



Chapter Six

THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

6.1. Introduction

Anointing of the sick which is the sixth sacrament, offers the comfort of God's grace to those who are ill and weak. As the name 'anointing of the sick' signifies, it is the sacrament for the sick people. The sacrament provides spiritual and sometimes physical healing, according to God's will, but also allows the sick person to join his or her sufferings to Christ and prepare for death. The essential rite of this

sacrament involves anointing with the oil and prayer. The apostolic tradition of praying for the sick and anointing them with the Holy Oil later transformed as the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Jesus Christ instituted this sacrament. We are aware about the care and concern of Jesus for the sick and weak people. The same happens in this sacrament. The sick person experiences the loving care of Jesus Christ through the sacrament of the anointing of the sick.

6.2. History

The sacrament of the anointing of the sick has its roots even in the Old Testament days. We read in Exodus 15: 26; “If you will listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God, and do what is right in his sight, and give heed to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will not bring upon you any of the diseases that I brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord who heals you”. God has promised Israel that when they follow his commandments and fulfill his will, they will free from all the calamities and diseases.

The basic idea is that the Omnipotent God is the one who is in control of everything. The prophets taught about the salvific nature of the miseries and sufferings. This was in the context of the persecutions of that the Israelites underwent. . It gave a new meaning for the diseases and miseries of mankind. It was in this sense 'the book of Job' was written. Thus the Old Testament puts forward two reasons for the diseases and miseries of man. First, diseases and miseries occur because you have failed to obey the commandments of Yahweh (Dt 28: 59 -61) and secondly the illness condition is state which could reveal the mercy and providence of Yahweh (Ex 23:25, Dt 7:15).

More evidently, the Anointing of the Sick has its roots in the healing miracles of Jesus Christ. Jesus healed people physically and spiritually, and He instructed His apostles to do the same. In Mark 6:7-13, for instance, Jesus sent His 12 apostles out in pairs, giving them the authority to heal the sick. Accordingly, the disciples drove out the evil spirits

and cured many sick people by anointing them with oil (Mathew 10:8). We have got plenty of instances from the Gospels that show the healing ministry of Jesus (Mt 8: 1-4, 5-13, 14-17, Mk 1: 29-34, 40-45, Lk 4: 38-41, 5: 17-26). This ministry of Jesus was later carried out by his disciples. This healing ministry as a sacrament drew its form heavily from James 5:14-16; “They should call for elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven”. In the early church elders had specific role of praying over the sick and anointing with the oil. The belief is that believers would be saved, raised, forgiven and healed through this sacrament. The early third century liturgical manuals speak about the practice of this sacrament. It included blessing for oil to be used for the anointing of the sick.

In the fifth century, the church taught that both

bishops and priests can be the ministers of this sacrament. Also it tied to the once only policy for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, as the final sacrament just before the death. Thus this sacrament became known as "Extreme Unction" which literally meant 'Last Rites'.

Later in AD 1439, the council of Florence gave manuals for the celebration of the sacrament of the anointing of the sick. According to the council, a priest is to be accompanied by a procession of believers when he visited the dying. The dying received absolution, Eucharist and extreme unction. In 1551, the Council of Trent insisted on the sacrament status of "Extreme Unction". The council reaffirmed that this sacrament was "to be administered to the sick, especially those who are so seriously ill that they seem next to death; hence it is also called the sacrament of dying. Though the sacrament confers grace, remits sin and comforts the sick, people were so much frightened to approach this sacrament, thinking that they will die once if they

receive this sacrament. Thus the sacrament of anointing of the sick underwent severe negligence and disrespect.

Therefore the Vatican Council II in 1963 wanted the name of the sacrament to be changed and wanted the rites revised to be more faithful to the ancient mind and tradition of the church. The council changed the name to 'Anointing of the Sick'. It referred this sacrament as a Viaticum before the final journey towards the heavenly Jerusalem. It should be regarded as the true sacrament of dying. According to the council, the Anointing of the Sick was rather to be seen as an expression of God's presence in the midst of human illness and Christ's healing power and concern for all those who are seriously sick. It changed the traditional idea of giving the sacraments only to those in danger of death to those who are ill and weak.

6.3. Anointing of the Sick in the Church

The church as the bride of the Christ gives special attention to the weak and sick. The service towards the weak and the sick has a very important role in the ministry of the church. We read in Mt 25: 43; “I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me”. The church understands the visit to the sick and the weak causes physical as well as spiritual healing. This sacrament is not exclusively reserved for those are in danger of death. Any baptized Catholic who has reached the age of reason (usually around seven years old) can receive this sacrament. Many Catholics also request the Anointing of the Sick before major surgery. Elderly Catholics who are experiencing the frailty and health challenges of old age are also welcome to receive the Anointing. The sacrament may be received more than once, even during the same illness if it progresses in seriousness. According to the catholic Church, there are three major objectives for the sacrament of

Anointing of the Sick; i) Entrust the illness in the hands of Jesus so that He could heal it, ii) Unite the sick and the weak with Jesus, iii) Associate the miseries of the sick with the passion of Jesus and thus make it salvific.

6.4 Anointing of the Sick in Malankara Liturgy

The custom prevailing in the Malankara Catholic Church is, if a member of the Church is seriously ill, to administer him/her the anointing of the sick at the earliest, when he/she is still conscious, and to give Holy Communion. This service is conducted either in the room of the patient or by its side according to the order of the Malankara Catholic Church. Throughout the prayers of the Anointing of the Sick, the following themes reflect:

- a. Entreating mercy from God
- b. Absolution of sin
- c. Bliss in heaven

Sacramental Service has the following order:

- a. Introductory prayer
- b. Psalms
- c. *Proemion- sedro-ethro*
- d. Reading from the Holy Scripture

After the reading of the Gospel, there is the petition of St. James. This is the prayer of the community as a whole to God, for the cure of the sick person. Then the sick person recites the act of contrition and makes confession of sins. In case the patient is unable to say the act of contrition by himself, another one recites the prayer and the patient repents and the patient prays for the absolution of sins.

There are two prayers, one long and the other short in preparation for confession in the book of the order of service.

- The sick person begs absolution for sins committed in body and in soul, having repented over them.
- The person requests absolution for each sin committed with the senses of the body: eye, nose, ear, skin and tongue and with the internal senses: consciousness, thinking, understanding and knowledge.

The anointing follows the confession. The celebrant dips the tip of his right thumb in the oil and reciting the prescribed prayer makes the sign of the cross three times on the forehead of the patient and then imposes his hand on the head of the patient. This is the prayer recited while anointing the forehead: “May you be cleansed and sanctified in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. May your debts and the sins you committed with or without consent and with or without knowledge be forgiven. May your evil emotions and devilish activities be wiped out from you”. After anointing the forehead,

eyes, ears, lips, nose, hands and legs and the whole body are anointed with oil. After the anointing, the *kukkilion* of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints, are sung and with the final blessing the service comes to an end.

Kanthila : *The sacrament of the anointing of the sick is also given to priests and bishops. This same sacrament for priests and bishops is called **Kanthila**.*

6.5. Symbols of the Sacrament

As with all Catholic sacraments, Catholics believe the Anointing of the Sick uses human objects and actions as symbols to point to something beyond themselves, God's grace.

- **Oil** has been recognized from ancient times for its properties of healing and cleansing. A person who has been anointed with oil is set apart for a special purpose. In terms of the sacrament, oil symbolizes healing from illness,

cleansing from sin, and consecration (i.e., setting apart as holy) to God.

- The priest or bishop often anoints the sick person's forehead with the **sign of the cross**, which reminds Catholics that their salvation comes through the cross of Jesus Christ, and that they are called to unite their sufferings to those of Jesus.
- The **forehead** is one of the most visible places on the human body. Catholics believe that their faith in Christ should be visible through their actions. An anointing on the forehead also symbolizes the need to know Christ and follow Him.
- The **laying on of hands** by the priest or bishop comforts the sick person but also symbolizes the power of God entering the sick person through the mediation of the priest or bishop.

6.6. Effects of the Sacrament

According to Catholic doctrine, the Anointing of the Sick affects the sick person in the following ways:

- It provides courage, strength, and peace in the face of illness.
- It helps the sick person to trust in God no matter what happens.
- It gives the sick person grace to unite his or her suffering to the passion of Christ.
- It provides physical and/or spiritual healing according to God's will.
- It offers necessary graces so that the sick person may prepare for death.
- It pours out consolation and hope.
- It provides an opportunity for the forgiveness of sins even when the sick person is too ill to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation.

- It prepares one for the entry into the eternal life

6.7. Conclusion.

As the members of the same society we all are related to each other. It demands love and care for the other especially in one's weak and sick condition. The sixth sacrament of the church is an expression of its care and concern for the weak and sick. The priests and religious making available themselves for the sick people through their whole period of sickness resembles the person of Jesus Christ. As the members of the Church, we are also called to this service either directly by administering this sacrament by the Sacrament of Holy Order or indirectly by visiting and praying for the weak and the sick as the members of the Church.



Servant of God Archbishop Mar Ivanios

Pray for us!